

State of Connecticut, laudably, has passed laws to effectively ban, for example, the sale of assault weapons.

But this body and this government need to act. The Federal Government has a responsibility that only it can address, because we know that guns are trafficked across State lines. Stolen and illegally bought guns are trafficked across State lines. No single State can put a stop to it.

We know that without action in this body, mental health will remain an unmet need in this country. We know that without action in this country, background checks for people who buy firearms will be incomplete and inadequate.

So Javier's death should be a reminder and a call to action. As the people of his family and New Haven mourn his death, we should celebrate his contributions in making our planet better, in protecting the precious resources that, unfortunately, he was unable to enjoy, and resolve to protect better the innocent people, particularly our children, who at any moment, at any place, may become victims of gun violence.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in morning business for debate only until 3:15; that the majority leader be recognized at 3:15, with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, we have been discussing, the last couple of days, the unemployment insurance issue. A number of us have had concerns relative to the effectiveness of the program relative to the cost that would undertake and how it would be paid for if it goes forward and is extended and the reforms we think would be needed to make this a much more effective program. We have not been offered the opportunity to do more than just discuss it on the floor. We have not been offered the opportunity to offer amendments, offer our ideas, have them debated and voted on. It is my understanding that the majority leader will be coming to the floor shortly to potentially—well, to tell us what the decision is relative to whether we will have that opportunity.

Let me very quickly say I have been working with my colleagues Senator

AYOTTE from New Hampshire and Senator PORTMAN from Ohio. All three of us voted for the motion to proceed because we felt this is an issue that ought to be discussed and debated, and not simply dismissed, and because we would like to make corrections to the program that make it more viable.

We would like to raise the issue of, is there a better way to deal with unemployment in this country? We have some amendments that would allow us to move and improve and move to what we think is a better way, as well as pay for a bill that, without being paid for, exceeds the budget agreement we just entered into.

I offered four amendments. I was not insisting on offering all four. They were similar to what my colleagues had offered. The three of us want to very briefly speak to these and indicate to our colleagues what it is we would be doing. I offered the original bill way last fall, which would delay the individual mandate under the Affordable Care Act.

As we all know, the President has delayed for 1 year the mandates on employers who provide health insurance for their employees, but did not so do so for individuals, for those who do not have coverage under their employer. We did not feel that was fair. Why one entity and not the other? It also violated the law that the President took the liberty to exercise.

We are saying: Well, let's at least be fair, that those who are not covered by the 1-year delay on the mandate of employers would be subject to having to comply and we have—I will not go through all of the details, but we have seen the disaster that has happened in terms of that rollout.

My amendment, No. 2611 to this bill, I am going to select out as the amendment I am going forward with. My colleagues also have excellent ideas. They will be offering those. Frankly, I agree with all of their amendments and what they are doing also, so I think we are pretty much on the same page.

This amendment would delay the individual employer mandate under ObamaCare for 1 year. The estimated cost savings on this is \$35 billion. I think that is a savings that obviously could be used for a number of offsets. I think at this particular point in time, I would yield the floor and let my colleague from New Hampshire explain her amendment and how the savings would be applied to some very necessary things.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Indiana. As he said, I, as did my colleague from Indiana and my colleague from Ohio, moved to allow this bill to go forward for debate. I thought it was important that we have a debate on obviously the situation of struggling workers in our country and on the issue of whether to extend unemployment benefits for them.

I have been clear that on the pending bill if there is a way we can responsibly pay for this temporary 3-month extension to do that, I would be willing to support that—except the current bill does not have a way to pay for it—because I do not believe we should be adding to our debt, \$17 trillion, and our yearly deficits in order to do this.

But let me say that I have a very commonsense amendment. It is amendment No. 2603. Let me say what it is about. My amendment fixes what is an abuse in our Tax Code. The Treasury inspector general found that individuals who are not authorized to work in this country are collecting billions of dollars in tax refunds by filing for an additional child tax credit. The disturbing part about this trend is that there has been a steady increase each year of billions of dollars collected by illegal workers seeking these refunds.

Investigations of these tax refunds have found some gross examples of fraud; examples of refunds for children, children who do not live in the United States of America; examples of fraud of many children who may not even exist. For example, in Indiana, they found four unauthorized workers claiming over 20 children who lived in a residence, fraudulently collecting tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars. They found examples of tax refund claims for children who live in Mexico, not the United States of America. In North Carolina, 1,000 tax returns were linked to 8 addresses—1,000 tax returns were linked to 8 addresses, refunding \$5 million in tax refunds. Another example in North Carolina: 398 returns associated with 2 apartments—398 returns, refunding \$1.9 million to workers who are not authorized to work in our country. There was no evidence that the children being claimed either lived in the United States of America or even existed, for that matter.

My amendment is very straightforward in terms of the fix. The filer of the tax return who is going to claim the additional child tax credit would have to list a Social Security number. This is the same requirement for those who claim the earned income tax credit for which you can receive a tax refund if you qualify. So it would be simply to add that same requirement.

What the Joint Committee on Taxation has estimated is that we could save \$20 billion over the next 10 years simply by treating this child tax credit just like the earned filers income tax credit, that filers would have to use a Social Security number as well.

What would this \$20 billion go for? With this \$20 billion, we can pay for the recent cuts in the budget that were unfair, where our men and women in uniform, military retirees, were singled out for cuts to their retirement, to their cost-of-living increases, including, by the way, our wounded warriors, those who have medically retired, who got a cut to their cost-of-living increase in this recent budget. This was the only group that was singled out in

this way, those who have taken a bullet for our country, many who have done multiple tours for us in Afghanistan and Iraq, and some who have suffered horrible wounds, including those many of us have had the privilege of visiting at Walter Reed. So we can pay for and fix the military retirement cuts, as many Members on both sides of the aisle have said we have a commitment to do, because we think that was unfair.

What else can we do with this? We can also pay for the bill pending on the floor, the 3 months extension of unemployment benefits for American workers who are struggling during this period, who are trying to get back to work.

Finally, we can also take the remainder of the savings and apply it to the deficit. Again, fix tax abuse, where there has been fraud, rampant fraud found by investigations by requiring a Social Security number, such as the earned-income tax credit, and in return it is a three-for.

We can pay for the 3-month unemployment extension on this floor, we can fix the unfair cut to military retirees and to our wounded warriors, and we can help reduce our deficit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator's time has expired.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time with respect to the motion to proceed to S. 1845 is considered expired.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1845) to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. This is similar to "Groundhog Day" because this is a picture we have already seen in the very lucid speech given by my friend from New Hampshire.

She should have gone back through the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We have been through this before.

We are not going to hurt American children, and that is what it does. We have been through this. This is something we have tried to use in the past to pay for things that are very unfair to American children.

The other issue is there have been some efforts made, and good-faith efforts made by the Senator from Ohio, to stop double dipping—people who are on disability and are drawing unemployment insurance. We agree with him. We can take care of that, but it does not save \$5.4 or \$5.6 billion.

The disability community at this point is outraged that anyone will even suggest this. We can stop the double dipping. We are happy to join with them in doing that, but that savings is a little over \$1 billion. We are pleased, and that is part of the proposal we will all have in a little bit.

I received a phone call from a person who has done more for helping people who are disabled than any person in the history of this body, the senior Senator from the State of Iowa. He had been previously engaged and he heard about this. Those of us who know TOM HARKIN know what he does to protect the disabled. I know my friend from Ohio has good intentions, but the disability community will never allow this to happen, and they are right.

My friend, the junior Senator from Nevada, as some of us know, has had casts on one leg and now the other leg. He has had some surgery on his ankles. He has had to replace the Achilles tendons in both of his legs. A cast broke, I think it was on his left leg—maybe it was his right leg. I don't remember.

I talked to him this morning and he had to go to the emergency room to get his cast replaced. I am waiting to hear from him. I have explained this proposal in some detail to him and his staff, but he hasn't had an opportunity to speak to his staff since he had to rush to the emergency room—at least that is my understanding—so I am waiting until he gets back.

The proposal Senator REED has come up with extends unemployment insurance through mid-November. The package does what the Republicans wanted. It is entirely paid for. There are structural changes which they have been demanding, and we have done that. It has reforms that reduce slightly the number of weeks an unemployed person can remain on the unemployment insurance, while all along preserving extending the weeks of high-unemployment States.

The legislation proposed by Senator JACK REED tightens the rules for unemployment insurance. It would include a proposal, much like that advocated by the Senator from Ohio Mr. PORTMAN, that would prevent people from collecting both unemployment insurance and disability insurance at the same time. That is clear.

Much of this offset is simply an extension of the Murray-Ryan agreement we all voted for—or a lot of us voted for earlier. This provision would extend the sequester on mandatory programs for another year. If Republicans have a complaint about this, don't call and complain to JACK REED. Call PAUL RYAN. This is his. This is his idea—maybe not on this specific issue, but this is his proposal, his idea.

We believe if it is good enough to help other proposals propounded by my Republican friends in the House, it is good enough to help the unemployed.

In this proposal, there has been a desire to address the concerns of the Republicans and Democrats. Is it perfect?

Of course not, but JACK REED has done a remarkably good job, and we believe this is a sound and balanced proposal.

I would also say this takes care of it for the good part of this year. I wish we could have done it until the first of the year. We can't find enough money. I have been waiting here for more than 24 hours for a reasonable proposal by my Republican friends to pay for this. We don't have one yet.

We are not going to strip the rights of people who have health insurance, and we are certainly not going to go after little boys and girls in America who have the child tax credit. There comes a time when we have to move forward.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection has been heard.

Mr. PORTMAN. Is there objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, objection was heard.

The clerk will continue to call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk continued with the call of the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk continued with the call of the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I first of all appreciate everyone's cooperation here—patience more than cooperation. We are doing our best. I have already said what we are trying to do here, and I will repeat just a part of it.

We have a proposal that is paid for. It is a pay-for that we have used and it is something I think is totally valid. The original idea came from PAUL RYAN, but we have used it on another occasion. This has nothing to change that original proposal except to extend it for 1 year. The proposal of my friend from Ohio—an issue he has alerted us to—we think we have taken care of in this amendment. I think it is a fine proposal, but the breadth of what he is trying to do is really unfair and we can't do that. So we are doing our utmost.

We have structural changes in this. It is paid for—a pay-for for almost to